

Message Text

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ACTION MMO-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 ABF-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SP-02

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R 292032Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9153

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1091

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: BEXP, AMGT, APER, TD

SUBJECT: REPROGRAMMING OF ECON/COMMERCIAL POSITIONS

REF: STATE 101921, PORT OF SPAIN 0796, 75 PORT OF SPAIN 1710

1. ABOVE-REFERENCED PORT OF SPAIN MESSAGES RECOMMENDED OR DEALT WITH CREATION OF ONE ADDITIONAL FSL E/C POSITION, AND 1976 FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTION REPORT FOR THE CARIBBEAN ALSO STRONGLY RECOMMENDED CREATION OF SUCH A POSITION IN PORT OF SPAIN.

2. JUSTIFICATION IS BASED UPON MARKEDLY INCREASED U.S. EXPORT PROSPECTS IN TRINIDAD. TRINIDAD IS A MODEST OIL PRODUCER, AND AS A RESULT OF THE OIL PRICE INCREASES FOLLOWING THE 1973 ARAB BLOCKAGE, THIS COUNTRY'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES SOARED FROM \$35 MILLION (A MERE SIX WEEKS' IMPORT BILL) TO \$700 MILLION AT THE END OF 1975. IN THE 1973-75 PERIOD, U.S. EXPORTS TO TRINIDAD NEARLY DOUBLED FROM \$120 MILLION TO \$235 MILLION. MOST OF THIS "WINDFALL" REVENUE IS EARMARKED TO FINANCE A DIVERSIFIED ENERGY-RELATED INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM AND THE RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS, ALL OF WHICH OFFER DRAMATIC POSSIBILITIES FOR SALE OF U.S. ENGINEERING AND DESIGN SERVICES, TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, AND CAPITAL GOODS. IN THE FACE OF THESE DEMANDS, EMBASSY'S TINY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION (ONE AMERICAN OFFICER, TWO LOCALS INCLUDING SECRETARIAL SUPPORT) CAN ONLY PROVIDE REACTIVE SERVICES, I.E.

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DESCRIBE MAJOR PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS, RESPOND TO

WASHINGTON-IMPOSED REQUIREMENTS, AND REPORT TRADE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH COME TO OUR ATTENTION. WE VITALLY NEED A QUALIFIED MARKET RESEARCH/ANALYSIS OFFICER WHO COULD IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE FORTHCOMING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES, AND PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT A GOAL-ORIENTED TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM.

3. DEVICE FOR CREATION OF ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL FSL POSITION IN THE MANNER RECOMMENDED BY 1976 INSPECTION REPORT HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE IMPOSSIBLE BY DEPARTMENT ON PROCEDURAL GROUNDS (STATE 87285), AND AS AN INTERIM SOLUTION EMBASSY HAS ASKED FOR FY 76 FUNDS TO EMPLOY QUALIFIED MARKET RESEARCHER TO IDENTIFY "BEST PROSPECTS" FOR FUTURE U.S. EXPORT PROMOTION. CONTRACT HIRE IS ONLY A STOP-GAP SOLUTION, HOWEVER, SINCE WHAT WE NEED IS AN ADDITIONAL WELL-TRAINED PERMANENT STAFF MEMBER WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE TO FULL RANGE OF PROMOTION AND MARKET ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES, INSTEAD OF CARRYING OUT AD HOC CONTRACTUAL ASSIGNMENTS.

4. ADDITIONAL FSL MARKET SPECIALIST IS ONLY ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL RESOURCE THIS EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. WE CONSIDER IT TO BE OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN ORDER TO ENABLE US TO DEVOTE REASONABLE RESOURCES TO ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY, WHICH IS CLEARLY OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN ANY ANALYSIS OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS MISSION.
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